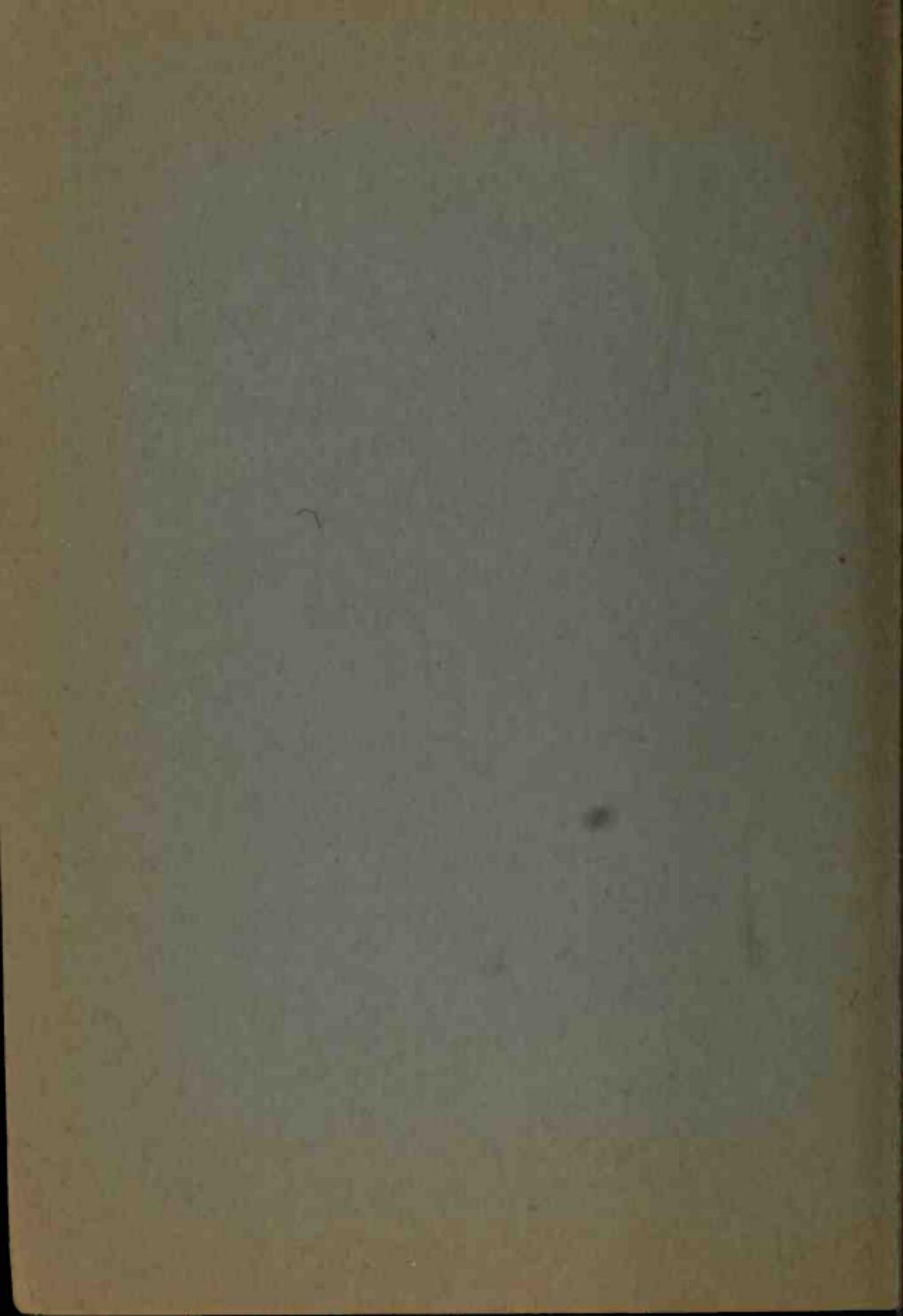


LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO.
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

579

The Three Sphinxes and Other Poems

George Sylvester Viereck



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[Other selections from Mr. Viereck's poetry appear in the Haldeman-Julius Pocket Series under the title "The Haunted House and Other Poems," No. 578.]

THE POET PSYCHO-ANALYZES HIMSELF

THIS volume, like its predecessor, "The Haunted House, and Other Poems," No. 578, contains selections from "Nineveh and Other Poems," "The Candle and the Flame," "Songs of Armageddon," in addition to a number of poems not previously published in book form. The second volume embraces a number of lyric ballads, being on the whole less intensely personal, if no less intensely passionate than volume one.

However, such differences are superficial. Wherever we touch a book, we touch a man. If we but search an author, we always discover a master key! Every manifestation of the Life Force is a confession. It is impossible to write a treatise on radio without revealing one's self. The libido, however disguised, will always assert itself.

It was my original intention to divide my poetry into certain well defined psychological groups. There are clusters of thought and emotions, "complexes," to use the vocabulary of psycho-analysis, which seem to occur again and again in my verse. Eros and Jesus, Lilith and Eve, constitute my chief lyric "complexes."

Almost every poem owes its inspiration to one of these four fundamental types. However,

no symbol is entirely adequate. At every step the complexes grow more complex. Frequently one merges into the other.

"The Three Sphinxes" visualizes the conflict between Jesus and Eros, between heavenly and earthly love; between Lilith and Eve, love, sweetly human, and "woman wailing for her demon lover." The antagonism between Eros and Jesus appears in "Spring": an attempt to synthesize the two conceptions enlivens the finale of "Jesus in New England."

In "Children of Lilith," we catch a glimpse of Lilith in the countenance of Eros. Both Lilith and Eve appear in "A Vision of Woman," but no attempt is made to reconcile the irreconcilable. The Eve-Lilith conflict is the struggle between Helen of Troy and the blonde Marguerite. The desire to achieve a new synthesis of woman, dissolving the Eve-Lilith conflict, lends significance to "Dr. Faust's Descent from Heaven."

It would be necessary to play with divers combinations and permutations in order to make the grouping psychologically correct. This task is too pedantic for me. I leave it to the psycho-analysts and to the ingenuity of the reader. Perhaps I may change my mind some day when I publish my collected poems or my autobiography. Most of my books of verse are out of print. The two little volumes in the Pocket Series are the only form in which my verse is, at present, accessible.

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

New York, June, 1924.

SLAVES

NO puppet master pulls the strings on high,
Portioning our parts, the tinsel and the
paint:

*A twisted nerve, a ganglion gone awry,
Predestinates the sinner and the saint.*

*Each, held more firmly than by hempen band,
Slave of his entrails, struts across the scene:
The malnutrition of some obscure gland
Makes him a Ripper or the Nazarene.*

IRON PASSION

LOVE'S smiling countenance I know,
But not the anger of the god,
For I have wandered where Boccaccio
And Casanova trod.

I am aweary of these pleasant things,
The gallant dalliance and the well-watched
fire:

Give me the magic of a thousand springs
That shook the blood of young Assyrian kings,

That stirs the young monk in his cell, and
stings

Crimson and hot!

Wearing the crown of unassuaged desire,
Break me or bless me—only love me not!

Come as a wanton red with rouge and wine
And I shall weave out of my song for thee
A purpler cloak than his
Who, hating, loved that Lesbia. Come to me
A saint—the halo shall be thine
Of Beatrice.

There is no joy in tender loves or wise,
No sweet in wrong:
Come unto me with cruel, loveless eyes,
O iron passion of the lords of song!

THE THREE SPHINXES

BEFORE the image older than the world,
Or ill or good,
By Titan hand into the desert hurled,
In the Egyptian sunset musing stood—
Long having travelled by fantastic roads
Where in deep sands the tremulous footstep
sinks—
The oldest and the youngest of the gods,
Saying:
“Upon my life has fallen thy shadow,
O Sphinx!”

Replied the Sphinx: "O son of Aphrodite,
Shall wisdom teach thee how the soul is won,
Or the hot sands be balsam on thy lids?
Behold approach from Thebes and Babylon,
Huge birds grotesque against the falling gloom,
My far-come younger sisters." And a mighty
Thunder of pinions shook the pyramids,
And made the mummies mumble in their tomb.

The three stern sisters of the mystery
Enduring and miraculously wrought
In granite and in porphyry,
Then, holding concourse in the desert, spake
With the great sound of billows on the sea
That rumble as they break:
"Thou, Eros, art the eternal riddle, we
Are but in stone the semblance of thy thought."

Limbed like the panther, featured like a man,
The wisest of the Sphinxes thus began,
That still had waited where the river steams
And winds the caravan:
"In my brain's cavern seven cubits span
Dwell visions splendidous
Of the great lords of song and thought
and might,
Who in the large eyes of Antinous
Behold the Deeper Light,
Upon my lashes gleams
Still Shakespeare's rhythmic tear;
Here Plato musing dreamed his dreams

Of spirit-passion; David here
In the long night-watch sang of Jonathan."

Then rose the wingèd Theban, figure dual
Of maid and lion strangely wed;
"I am the blood that tingles, and the jewel
Of all the world's desire adorns my head—
The lithe-limbed youths that fell for Helen's
sake

Have died for me,
The lads that wake
To ripeness curse me as they ache
Beneath my tyranny.

My mandates sweet and cruel
Nor prayer nor penance shall revoke:
I am the flame, men's bodies are the fuel,
Men's souls the smoke."

The pinioned Sphinx of Babylon,
Human in naught, Lord Eros thus addressed:
"Wherever men have spat thy face upon
Or sought strange pleasure in unholy quest,
My breath had made them mad.
I am the dream that Nero's mother had
Ere burned his natal star.
I am the ghastly vision of de Sade:
Astarte and Priapus wage
War for my beauty monstrous, barren, bare;
The Cretan knew me and from far
My image fell upon the crimson page
Of Swinburne and of Baudelaire."
The silence shivered as in tearless woe
When they had done, the Foam-begotten broke

Across his knee the sceptre and the bow:
"The empyrean is beyond your reach,
Your substance earth of earth,
And even she that called on Plato's name
Bears soilure of a mortal birth.
The triple mirror are you of my shame
Half-beast are two, one wholly beast, in each
Is somethiing bestial, and your wings' winds
choke
Within my heart the unadulterate flame."

But the three Sphinxes mighty murmuring
Thus answer made: "O Love,
Turn thou thy wrath above,
Where round God's throne the cosmic sunsets
fling
The light that shall not fade.
Beneath his feet the countless æons roll,
His slow relentless purpose knows the goal
Of things, and joining flesh and spirit made
A beast the mansion of the soul."

And lo, the spring's breath faded from Love's
charm,
The sunshine from his hair,
And in his arm
The arrows turned to rods.
He heeded not the silent years that crawl
Like uncouth spiders. Weary, cynical,
Self-conscious, disenchanted stood he there.
The oldest and the saddest of the gods.

THE CYNIC'S CREDO

FROM the cloistered halls of knowledge
where fantastic lights are shed
By a thousand twisted mirrors, and the dead
entomb their dead,
Let us walk into the city where men's wounds
are raw and red.
Three gifts only Life, the strumpet, holds for
coward and for brave,
Only three, no more—the belly and the phallus
and the grave!

When the slow disease of time writes on our
face its horrid scrawl,
These be good gifts, these be real, let what will
the rest befall,
Both the first gift and the second—but the last
is best of all.
Faith and hope and friends desert us ere the
cerecloth's folds are drawn;
These remain while life remains and one re-
mains when all are gone.

Who am I to judge the pander? Who are you
to damn the thief?
We are all but storm-tossed sailors stranded on
the self-same reef.
Strip us of our fine-cut garments, smite us
with some primal grief,
Then behold us writhing naked, chain-bound
to our carcass, slave

To the belly and the phallus and (more kind
than God) the grave.

Why desire the stars in heaven, why ask more
when we have these?

Beast and bird shall be our comrades, we as
they may live in ease.

Not for us God's angel choir and His cosmic
silences!

Say not that we, too, are gods, since no god is
strong to save

From the hunger of the belly and the phallus
and the grave.

Saints and sinners all are brothers, none is
happy while a trace

Of divine and half-forgotten distant music
makes the race

Dream of freedom in the trap that holds the
good man and the base.

Like the worm that eats our substance, long-
ing eats our hearts: we crave

For a life beyond the belly and the phallus and
the grave.

Let us nurse no vain delusion! Feast on love
and wine and meat,

While girls' breasts blush into rosebuds and
the touch of flesh is sweet,

For the earth, our buxom mother, loves the
sound of dancing feet!

Though God cursed us with a glimmer of His
consciousness He gave
Still the belly and the phallus and life's final
thrill—the grave!

And who knows but the Almighty in His heart
may envy us?
If a little draught of knowledge makes man's
life so dolorous,
Then the crown of His omniscience is a crown
of thorns, and thus
Time that ends not broods on heaven, a gigan-
tic incubus.
We at least, through evolution climbing up-
ward from the cave,
Have the belly and the phallus and God's
kindest gift, the grave.

THE GHOST OF OSCAR WILDE

WITHIN the graveyard of Montmartre
Where wreath on wreath is piled,
Where Paris huddles to her breast
Her genius like a child,
The ghost of Heinrich Heine met
The ghost of Oscar Wilde.

The wind was howling desolate,
The moon's dead face shone bright;
The ghost of Heinrich Heine hailed
The sad wraith with delight:

"Is it the slow worm's slimy touch
That makes you walk the night?

"Or rankles still the bitter jibe
Of fool and Pharisee,
When angels wept that England's law
Had nailed you to the Tree,
When from her brow she tore the rose
Of golden minstrelsy?"

Then spake the ghost of Oscar Wilde
While shrill the night hawk cried:
"Sweet singer of the race that bare
Him of the Wounded Side,
(I loved them not on earth, but men
Change somehow, having died).

"In Pere La Chaise my head is laid,
My coffin-bed is cool,
The mound above my grave defies
The scorn of knave and fool,
But may God's mercy save me from
The Psychopathic School!

"Tight though I draw my cerecloth, still
I hear the din thereof
When with sharp knife and argument
They pierce my soul above,
Because I drew from Shakespeare's heart
The secret of his love. . . .

"Cite not Krafft-Ebing, nor his host
 Of lepers in my aid, . . .
I was sufficient as God's flowers
 And everything He made;
 Yea, with the harvest of my song
 I face Him unafraid."

"The fruit of Life and Death is His;
 He shapes both core and rind . . ."
 Cracked seemed and thin the golden voice,
 (The worm to none is kind),
 While through the graveyard of Montmartre
 Despairing howled the wind.

THE PARROT

O BIRD grotesque and garrulous,
 In green and scarlet liveried,
 Thy ceaseless prattle hides from us
 The secret of thy dream indeed.
 But in thine eyeball's mystic bead
 Are mirrored clear to them that read
 Vague, nameless longings, like the breed
 Of some exotic incubus.

Where is thy vision? Overseas?
 In some bright tropic far-off land
 Where chiding simians in tall trees
 Swing by luxurious breezes fanned,
 While at fantastic phallic feasts

Brown women uncouth idols hail,
And through the forest sounds the wail
Of the fierce matings of wild beasts?

Or are thine other memories,
Of other lives on other trees,
Encasements in some previous flesh
In far-off lost existences?

For, as the tiger leaves his spoor
Upon the prairie, firm and sure
Life writes itself upon the brain,
The soul keeps count of loss and gain,
And in the vibrant, living cells
Of the small parrot's brain there dwells
A sparkle of the flame benign
That makes the human mind divine.

The self-same Life-Force fashions us:
Its writings are the stars on high,
Its transient mansions thou as I.
Through Plato's mouth it speaks to us,
Through the earth's vermin even thus.
The heaving of a baby's breast
And the gyrations of the sun
To its omnipotence are one
And make its meaning manifest.

We both are wanderers through all time
Who, risen from the primal slime
When God blew life into the dust,

Press to some distant goal sublime.
And often through the thin soul-crust
Rush memories of an alien clime,
Of gorgeous revels more robust
Than any dream of hate or lust
In the gilt cage upon us thrust,
And visions strange beyond all rhyme.

The Life-Force with itself at war
Moulds and remoulds us, blood and brain,
Yet cannot quench us out again,
And after every change we are.
The soul-spark in all sentient things
Illumes the night of death and brings,
Remembered, immortality.

Time cannot take thy soul from thee!
All living things are one by kind,
Heritors of the cosmic mind.
Thus deemed the Prophet on whose knee
The kitten slumbered peacefully,
And surely good Saint Francis, he
Who as his sister loved the hind.

THE CANDLE AND THE FLAME

THY hands are like cool herbs that bring
 Balm to men's hearts, upon them laid;
 Thy lovely-petalled lips are made
 As any blossom of the spring.
 But in thine eyes there is a thing,
 O Love, that makes me half afraid.

For they are old, those eyes. . . . They
 gleam
 Between the waking and the dream
 With antique wisdom, like a bright
 Lamp strangled by the temple's veil,
 That beckons to the acolyte
 Who prays with trembling lips and pale
 In the long watches of the night.

They are as old as Life. They were
 When proud Gomorrah reared its head
 A new-born city. They were there
 When in the places of the dead
 Men swathed the body of the Lord.
 They visioned Pa-Wak raise the wall
 Of China. They saw Carthage fall
 And marked the grim Hun lead his horde.

There is no secret anywhere
 Nor any joy or shame that lies
 Not writ somehow in those child-eyes
 Of thine, O Love, in some strange wise.

Thou art the lad Endymion,
And that great queen with spice and myrrh
From Araby, whom Solomon
Delighted, and the lust of her.

The legions marching from the sea
With Cæsar's cohorts sang of thee,
How thy fair head was more to him
Than all the land of Italy.
Yea, in the old days thou wert she
Who lured Mark Antony from home
To death and Egypt, seeing he
Lost love when he lost Rome.

Thou saw'st old Tubal strike the lyre,
Yea, first for thee the poet hurled
Defiance at God's starry choir!
Thou art the romance and the fire,
Thou art the pageant and the strife,
The clamour, mounting high and higher,
From all the lovers in the world
To all the lords of love and life.

Through thy slow slumberous long lashes
Across the languor of thy face
The gleam of primal passion flashes
That is as ancient as the race,
But we that live a little space,
Which when beholding feel in it
The horror of the Infinite . . .

Perhaps the passions of mankind
Are but the torches mystical
Lit by some spirit-hand to find
The dwelling of the Master-Mind
That knows the secret of it all,
In the great darkness and the wind.

We are the Candle, Love the Flame,
Each little life-light flickers out,
Love bides, immortally the same:
When of life's fever we shall tire
He will desert us, and the fire
Rekindle new in prince or lout.

Twin-born of knowledge and of lust,
He was before us, he shall be
Indifferent still of thee and me,
When shattered is life's golden cup,
When thy young limbs are shrivelled up,
And when my heart is turned to dust.

Nay, sweet, smile not to know at last
That thou and I, or knave, or fool,
Are but the involitient tool
Of some world purpose vague and vast.
No bar to passion's fury set,
With monstrous poppies spice the wine:
For only drunk are we divine,
And only mad shall we forget!

A BALLAD OF KING DAVID

AS David with Bath-Sheba lay,
 Both drunk with kisses long denied,
 The King, with quaking lips and gray,
 Beheld a spectre at his side
 That said no word nor went away.

Then to his leman spake the King,
 The ghostly presence challenging:

"Bath-Sheba, erst Uriah's wife,
 Thy lips are as the Cup of Life
 That holds the purplest wine of God,
 Too sweet for any underling."

"Yet," spake Bath-Sheba, sad of mien,
 "Why from thy visage went the sheen
 As though thy troubled eye had seen
 A shadow, like a dead man's curse,
 Rise threatening from the mound terrene?"

"'Twas but the falling dusk, that fills
 The palace with fantastic ills.

Uriah sleeps in alien sands
 Soundly. 'Tis not his ghost that stands,
 Living or dead, or anything
 'Twixt the King's pleasure and the King."
 Bath-Sheba's glad heart rose, then fell:
 "Where is it that thy fancies dwell?
 Is there some maid in Israel
 Broad-hipped, with green eyes like the sea,

Whose mouth is like a honey-cell,
And sweeter than the mouth of me?"

"The pressure of thy lips on mine
Is exquisite like snow-cooled wine.
Over the wasteness of my life
Thy love is risen like a sun:
All other loves that once seemed sweet
Are seized by black oblivion."

Again upon the shadow-thing
He gazed in silence, questioning.
And lo! with quaint familiar ring
A spectral voice addressed the King:
"O David, David, Judah's swan!
Why unto me dost thou this thing?"
"Who art thou?" "I am Jonathan,
My heart is like a wounded fawn.

"When Saul's fierce anger, like a bull,
Rose, by the Evil One made blind,
My love to thee was wonderful,
Passing the love of womankind.
Hast thou forgotten everything
My heart aches in remembering?
Is such the harvest of our spring
Of war and love and lute-playing?"

Was it a ghost's voice or the wind?
For still Bath-Sheba, unaware,
Smiled. But King David ill in mind
Scarce deemed her Beauty half so fair:

"Stale is the wine this evening,
And sick with roses is the air!"
He tore the garland from his hair,
And left Bath-Sheba lying there
Perturbed, and vaguely wondering . . .

BENEDICTION

SPRING'S blessing be upon you, dear!
Such is the prayer most meet for one
Whose eyes look up so starry-clear—
With all his flowerets new-begun
Still may he bless your pathway, dear,
Who weaves his golden threads around
Your heart and mine together bound:
Because your eyes are starry-clear—
Spring's blessing be upon you, dear!

Spring's blessing be upon you, child,
When all the earth with longing swells,
And lilies ring their silver bells
For joy that he is nigh,
And open wide, their lord to greet,
Adoring humbly at his feet
(Ah, spring has come, and spring is sweet!)
Their inmost pageantry,
And all the earth with love is wild—
Spring's blessing be upon you, child!

Spring's blessing be upon you, child,
And may the song of nightingales

Re-echo from the wooded dales—
Like women's arms so soft and mild,
And as deep crimson roses wild,
(Such is the song of the nightingales,
And sad as tears of one that wails
Where love's high temple is defiled);
Spring's blessing be upon you, child!

Spring's blessing be upon your ways,
Before in life's distracting maze
We fall on hopeless evil days!

True, summer comes more richly warm
And fraught with wilder passion's storm
Of torturing blisses;
But golden gleams spring's youthful form,
More sweet his kisses;
Soft breezes sing his roundelays—
Spring's blessing be upon your ways!

Spring's blessing be upon you, dear!
His hair is decked with flowery cheer;
Upon his brow the diadem
Shines out by right of youth immortal;
His might brings glad release to them
That were condemned without the portal
Of hope to live in sickening fear;
Spring's blessing be upon you, dear!

Spring's blessing be upon you, child!
And never may the wine-cup hold
One drop of bitter questioning.

May Death in spring-time find you, child—
 But Love shall toss his locks of gold
 And make all life an endless spring,
And fate and he be reconciled:
Spring's blessing be upon you, child!

SPRING

For Peter Pan

SPRING came carolling through the land,
 Roses and laughter on every hand;
But I was gazing with steadfast eye
 Where Christ was nailed on high.

Hawthorn blossoms were white and gay,
Promise of fruit in the laden spray—
 Only the tree of the Cross bare naught
 Save the ruin that death had wrought!

Spring passed on, and a breath of bloom
Swept through the casement, filled the room.
 I cried in a sudden agony:
 “Lord Jesus, set me free!”

“See, I am young, and the blood is hot,
Longing for what I compass not—
 Love, and sunshine, and fond delight
 In beauty warm and white.

“Lord, Thy Cross is a heavy load,
Thorny and steep the upward road—
 Lord, from the woods astir I hear
 Laughter and joyous cheer.

"Far be it from me, Lord, to scorn
The bitter anguish that Thou hast borne:
But redder his mouth in its youthful pride
Than the spear-wound in Thy side!

"Ah, see how his hair like soft-spun gold
Falls curling over his raiment's fold,
And his laughing eyes look out with glee
The great wide world to see!

"I thrill at his music silvery sweet,
And I long to follow his dancing feet:
For lo! where they fall the flowers are
born—
And hearts no more forlorn!

"My soul goes out to him since the hour
He passed me by in his winsome power,
And my blood is stirred by his witchery—
Prince Jesus, set me free!"

Bowed to my prayer the wounded Head,
Died in the west the sunset red—
And a slow, slow drop of blood ran down
From under the thorny crown.

Strange, in the years that have gone, the Cross
Had grown so dear to me that its loss
Went to my heart with a thrill of pain—
I had half turned back again!

O sweet Lord Spring, I am free at last
To follow wherever thy feet have passed,
Over the dales and over the rills
To the gladsome Grecian hills!

A VISION OF MAN

THE proud free glance, the thinker's mighty
brow,
The curling locks and supple, slender limbs,
The eye that speaks dominion, victor's smile—
All these I know. By them I hail thee Man,
Lord of the earth. Thou art the woman's slave,
And yet her master . . .

I know thee when about thy sunburnt thighs
Thou swing'st the tawny skin a tiger wore
Till thy rude weapon dashed him to the ground.
I know thee also when thy shoulders bear
The purple mantle of an emperor,
Stained with the blood of thousand tiny lives;
The golden sandals clasped upon thy feet;
Thy hair made rich with spikenard, and thy
brow
Graced with the gifts that mutual east and
west
Conspire to offer to their sovereign lord.

I know thee too in lust's relentless rage,
Dragging the chosen woman to thy lair,
To frame upon her body at thy will
Sons in thine image, strong of loin as thou:

And when, the bearer of thy father's sins,
 Within the portals of the House of Shame
 Monstrous delight thy passion seeks to find
 In futile quest, and Nature pitiful
 Will not transmit unto the future's womb
 Thy weakened generation . . .

Image of God I know thee—God thyself.
 Walking the world on India's sun-parched
 plains

Thy name was Rama; thou in desert sands
 Of Araby didst dream thy wondrous dream;
 The cradles of all races thou hast seen—
 Thou Zarathustra—thou the Son of Man!
 I know the wounds of hands and feet and
 side . . .

Ah, and I know the ring about thy neck
 Of ruddy curls! Say, Judas, in thine ear
 Make they sweet music still, the silver coins,
 As on the day the temple's veil was rent?

So, in the far-stretched background of all time
 I watch thy progress through the sounding
 years—

Wielding the sceptre here, and there the lyre,
 The lord or servant of thy master-passion,
 Pure or polluted, fool or nobly wise.
 And this it is that justifies the whole,
 This is thy greatness: thou hast stumbled oft,
 And straying often fallen. Yet all the while,
 Wandering the stony wilderness of life,
 Thine eyes were fixed upon the steadfast star

That far-off stands above the Promised Land.
Rough is the road, beset by mocking heavens
And false illusory hells—the strong, the weak
Alike by dancing fires are led astray,
And poisoned flowers bloom rankly on the
path.

Self in the guise of selfishness approached,
Frailty in garment of a god benign;
Pleasure with lying accents "I am sin"
Proclaimed, and vice, "I am bold action" cried;
"I am contentment," spoke the belly full,
And the applause of groundlings, "I am fame."

And so it came that only here and there
In all the years a strong, unerring one
Plucked boldly at the flowers of brief delight,
Yet by the dust of tumult unconfused
Pressed on to reach the goal; the strong man's
goal:

To rule and to enjoy, to hold command
Over both things and spirits, to enjoy
All pleasant sounds and all sweet gifts, yet
strive

Untiring, ever upward to that sun
Which no world-master's blind despotic will,
But his own hand, with more than Titan
strength,
Unto the utmost firmament has flung.

INHIBITION

To My Parents

O FOR the blithesomeness of birds
Whose soul floods ever to their tongue!
But to be impotent of words
With blinding tears and heart unstrung!

Each breeze that blows from homeward brings
To me who am so far away
The memory of tender things
I might have said and did not say.

Like spirit children, wraiths unborn
To luckless lovers long ago,
Shades of emotion, mute, forlorn,
Within my brain stalk to and fro.

When to my lips they rush, and call,
A nameless something rears its head,
Forbidding, like the spectral wall
Between the living and the dead.

O guardian of the nether mind
Where atavistic terrors reel
In dark cerebral chambers bind
Old nightmares with thy mystic seal!

But bar not from the sonant gate
Of being with thy fiery sword
The sweetest thing we wring from fate:
Love's one imperishable word!

THE PROTOZOAN

(A Chant of Immortality)

NO torches light the tragic night
In which I grope,
Friend have I none under the sun,
Nor hope.

Heedless I press past deeds that bless
And deeds that damn.
For I know this, that while Life is,
I am.

Beholding me, the Fateful Three
Ironies chortle.
Creeds are a sham. Gods die. I am
Immortal.

The pristine cell wherein I dwell
Outlasts the stars,
Renewing life 'spite cosmic strife
And scars.

Through pain and fear I persevere
Upreared from sod
And primal slime, to challenge Time
And God.

THE PLAINT OF EVE

MAN'S mate was I in Paradise,
Since of the fruit we twain did eat,
Through the slow toiling days his slave.
Because I asked for truth, God gave
All the world's anguish and the grave.
But, being merciful and wise,
He bade His angel bathe mine eyes
With the salt dew of sorrow. Sweet
Had been the dew of Paradise."

*Yet through the immemorial years,
Has she not healed us with her tears?*

"Albeit upon my lips I wore
A smile, my heart was ever sore.
Because I heard the Serpent hiss,
Therefore I suffered patiently.
But now I pray for bread, and ye
Gave me a stone or worse—a kiss."

*Shall not the stone rebound on us?
Shall not the kiss prove venomous?*

"No expiation dearly won,
Can turn the ancient loss to gain,
The Son of Man was Mary's Son . . .
Have I not borne the child in pain?
My sighs were mingled with His breaths!"

Yet, though I died a thousand deaths,
A thousand times a thousandfold,
With Him, my babe, upon the Cross,
My bloody sweats are never told,
And still the world's gain is my loss."

*Has she not suffered, has not died,
With every creature crucified?*

"The hallowed light of Mary's eyes
Within my bosom never dies.

The learned Faust, for all his pride,
Was saved by Gretchen—glorified—
To God, his master, thrice denied.

Love's smallest holy offices
When have I shirked them, even these?
From the grey dawn when time began
To the Crimean battle-field.

By every wounded soldier's side
With cool and soothing hands I kneeled."

*She is the good Samaritan
Upon life's every battle-field.*

"The secret book of Beauty was
Unlocked through me to Phidias.
Petrarcha's dream and Raphael's,
Rossetti's blessed damozels,
And all men's visions live in me.
The shadow queens of Maeterlinck,
Clothed with my soft flesh, cross the brink
Of utter unreality.

Rautendelein and Juliet,
Who shall their wistful smile forget?
The leader of my boyish band
I rule in Neverneverland."

*Her's is the sweetest voice in France,
And hers the sob that like a lance
Has pierced the heart of Italy.*

"With stylus, brush and angelot,
I seize life's pulses, fierce and hot.
In Greece, a suzerain of song,
The swallow was my singing mate,
My lyric sisters still prolong

My strain more strange than sea or fate.
Though Shakespeare's sonnets, sweet as wine,
Were not more 'sugared' than were mine,
Ye who with myrtle crown my brow,
Withhold the laurel even now."

*The world's intolerable scorn
Still falls to every woman born*

"Strong to inspire, strong to please,
My love was unto Pericles;
The Corsican, the demigod
Whose feet upon the nations trod,
Shrunk from my wit as from a rod.
The number and its secret train
Eluded not my restless brain.
Beyond the ken of man I saw,

With Colon's eyes, America.

 Into the heart of mystery,
 Of light and earth I plunged, to me
The atom bared its perfect plot."

What gifts have we, that she has not?

"Was I not lord of life and death
In Egypt and in Nineveh?
 Clothed with Saint Stephen's majesty
 My arm dealt justice mightily.
Men that beheld me caught their breath
With awe. I was Elizabeth.
I was the Maid of God. Mine was
The sway of all the Russias.
What was my guerdon, mine to take?
A crown of slander, and the stake!"

*How shall we comfort her, how ease
The pain of thousand centuries?*

"Back from my aspiration hurled,
I was the harlot of the world.
The levelled walls of Troy confess
My devastating loveliness.
Upon my bosom burns the scar
Eternal as the sexes are.
I was Prince Borgia's concubine,
Phryne I was, and Messaline,
And Circe, who turned men to swine."

*But shall they be forgotten, then,
Whom she has turned from swine to men?*

"New creeds unto the world I gave,
 But my own self I could not save.
For all mankind one Christ has sighed
 Upon the Cross, but hourly
 Is every woman crucified!
 The iron stake of destiny
Is plunged into my living side.
 To Him that died upon the Tree
Love held out trembling hands to lend
 Its reverential ministry,
And then came Death, the kindest friend—
 Shall my long road to Calvary,
 And man's injustice, have no end?"

*O sons of mothers, shall the pain
Of all child-bearing be in vain?
Shall we drive nails, to wound her thus,
Into the hands that fondled us?*

THE CONQUEROR

*"I, John Pierpont Morgan,
commit my soul into the
hands of my Savior, in full con-
fidence that having redeemed
and washed it in His most pre-
cious blood He will present it
faultless before the throne of
my Heavenly Father."*

*—The Last Will and Testa-
ment of John Pierpont Morgan.*

WHEN all was silent and the gloom
Grew thick, the dead man rose. The
mask

Slipped. Loath to tarry in the room,
He glanced not at the agate casque;

Nor at his tapestries, his scrolls,
The ransom of an hundred kings—
For he that conquers life, his soul's
Wraith is not chained to mundane things.

His cane with slow, deliberate care
Swinging, along the street moved he,
Until he reached the Golden Stair
That only dead men's eyes may see.

Of newly dead a spirit host
Made low obeisance when he came.
Though some be saved and some be lost,
He was the Master of the Game

In life and death. A grunt, a nod,
 Thanked them. They nudged each other's
 sides
 For each was fettered to the sod
 By some earth memory. A bride's
 Caress. A lad's clean limbs. The sheen
 In a child's face. A battle won.
 A crime. A dream. What might have been.
 —August, untroubled he passed on.

He puffed at his cigar. The spheres
 Made music. Then the ceaseless drone
 Of prayer went up. By myriad tiers
 Encircled rose the Holy Throne.

With no uncertainty of fate
 He brushed aside the angel throng
 And strode through the emblazoned gate
 Into the Heaven of the Strong.

THE WINNERS

*To my Wife,
 Margaret Edith Viereck.*

NEVER on the winning side,
 Always on the right—
 Vanquished, this shall be our pride
 In the world's despite.

Let the oily Pharisees
 Purse their lips and rant,

Calm we face the Destinies:
Better "can't" than Cant.

Bravely drain, then fling away,
Break the cup of sorrow!
Courage! He who lost the day
May have won the morrow.

JESUS IN NEW ENGLAND

HE saw the drab and dreary town
Upon the mirthless Sabbath day;
All pleasant things had crept away
Like serfs before the master's frown;
The very trees their heads hung down
Upon the mirthless Sabbath day.

Through joy-deserted streets He trod,
The church bells tolling mournfully.
There was no sound of childish glee,
No peal of laughter praising God
Hailed Him that loved the little ones
From Judah unto Galilee.

Barred in His name the magic bower
Of mimic kings and queens that seem,
Where still the fairy-jewels gleam,
And sonant for a little hour—
From faded parchment conjured up
Incarnate walks the poet's dream.

But through a gate obscure and small
He watched a pale-faced stripling crawl
 Into a closely-shuttered place
 Where Magdalens untouched of grace
Held their unlovely festival,
 Wearing the hunted look, uncanny,
 Of them that love not much but many.

And right across the house of guilt
Where sweet young lips were made all-wise
 In unchaste knowledge, and the wine
Of glorious youth was hourly spilt—
 Grinning upon Him like a skull,
 With windows bare like sightless eyes,
 There rose the House Unbeautiful
Wherein God's holy shrine was built.

And buzzing like a swarm of bees
 Around the church's open door,
In long frock coats and tall silk hats,
The sleek, the oily Pharisees
 With the complacent smile of yore—
Dear God, how He remembered these!

Upon a cross of ebony
 He saw His image painted bleak
 With pallid lips that seemed to speak;
“My God, thou hast forsaken me!”
 Such was the symbol of their faith—
 Not like a godhead, like a wraith
Convulsed with futile agony,
 Wherfrom no man might solace seek.

There was no incense in the air,
 Never a sweet-faced acolyte,
No priest in sacrificial dress
 Trailing with colors strange and bright;
No organ sounded pæans there,
 No candelabrum shed its light.
No gleam of hope . . . of loveliness,
 Of awe . . . or beauty anywhere.

Beside the tabernacle stood,
 Choked with things hateful that destroy,
A weazened parson cursing Joy;
And in his veins there flowed no blood.
Upon his tongue were words of grace,
 Yet every time he spake afresh
He drove a nail into His flesh,
And praying . . . spat into His face!

And, while his curses poured like showers
 Upon all things that men hold fair:
The pearls, the satin and the flowers,
 Life's graces, perfumed, debonair,
With voice of thunder spake the Master:
 “*Hold, parson! Cease thy blasphemy!*”
 “Who art thou, stranger”

“*I am He*

Who suffered her of Magdala
With the smooth satin of her hair
To dry His consecrated feet,
And break for Him the alabaster
That held the spikenard rare and sweet.”

The weazened parson deaf and blind
Proceeded of God's wrath to tell,
And of a lad, of one who fell
Through his hot blood and fates unkind,
Whom to the terrors of God's Hell
And to His vengeance he consigned.
Again the voice rose threateningly:
"Hold, parson! Cease thy blasphemy!"
"Who art thou, stranger?"

"I am He

Who in the wilderness forsaken,
Plucked from His flesh temptation's spur,
Forgave one in adultery taken
And bade ye throw no stone at her!"

And still the parson cursed and whined,
And thus he spoke to womankind:
"Vileness and sin of every shape
Lure in the ferment of the grape.
Seize by the root the fruit malign
That turns all good men into swine!"
"Impious parson, on thy knee!
How dare ye judge your Maker? He
Am I who at His mother's sign,
And for her glory, turned the water
In the six water-pots to wine!"

"I am who through the bigot pride
Of righteous fools is crucified.
All lovely things, if these be slain,
Then were My sacrifice in vain!"

*For man is not the devil's booty,
Not mine the scorpion and the rod,
Not sorrow is your heavy duty,
And they that worship Him in beauty
And gladness . . . are most dear to God.*

*"Men of the New World, heed Me, bliss
And all God's good gifts are your gain!
From Old World nightmares cleanse your
brain:
Columbus has not cross the main
To open up new worlds to pain!
But he and they who tell you this,
Good folk, betray you with a prayer
As they betrayed Me with a kiss!"*

And like mysterious music died
His accents on the shivering air;
And through the heavens opening wide
He vanished where no man might follow.
Roses for thorns were in His hair,
And on His visage, dwelling there,
Those who beheld Him saw, enticed,
The awful beauty of Apollo,
The loving kindness which is Christ.
But choked with visions that destroy,
Still by the cross the parson stood,
A gibbering madman cursing Joy! . . .

THE BALLAD OF THE GOLDEN BOY

DA VINCI'S brow in curious lines
Of contemplation deep was knit.
Fair dreams before his eyes alit
Like water when the moonlight shines,
Or amber bees that come and flit:
How to make rare and exquisite
A pageant for the Florentines.

He beckoned to his page, a lad
Whose lips were like two crimson spots,
Eyes had he like forget-me-nots.
Yet all his boyhood sweet and glad
In frock of homely-spun was clad.

And of his multi-colored whims
The strangest thus the master told:
“Child, I shall crown thy head with gold,
And stain with gold thy lovely limbs.
For once in this sad age uncouth
The bloom of boyhood and of youth
Shall be with splendour aureoled.”

The boy's heart leaped in one great bound.
“Thy gracious will,” said he, “be done!”
And ere the lad was disengowned
The eager painter had begun
To clothe his hair with glory round
And make his visage like the sun.

Then, seven stars upon his breast,
And in his hands a floral horn,
Like a young king or like a guest
From heaven, riding on the morn,
Splendid and nude, the boy was borne
In triumph on the pageant's crest.

Like the sea surging on the beach,
Reverberant murmurs rise to greet
The masqueraders on the street.
But what is this? A learned leech
Hatless, dishevelled, runs to meet
The train. White terror halts his speech

"Poor lad, my lad, for Heaven's pity,"
Shakes on the air a father's cry,
"Strip from thy flesh this gilded lie,
Else, for the pleasure of the city,
A self-slain Midas, thou must die!"

And terror smote the revelry.
The master's features white and sad
Twitched, yet no single word spake he,
But full and straight rose up the lad,
Upon his lips curled wistfully
The smile that Mona Lisa had.

"Good Sir," said he, "what mortal power
In all the dark-winged years and fleet,
Could me, a lowly lad, endower
With any boon more great, more sweet,

Than to have felt one epic hour
A city's homage at my feet?

"By the slow tooth of time uneaten,
And all the foul things that destroy,
From Life's mad game I rise unbeaten,
Drenched with the wine of youth and joy,
Great Leonardo's Golden Boy.

"Let this be told in song and story,
Until the eyes of the world grow dim,
Till the sun's rays are wan, and hoary
The ringlets of the cherubim,
That in my boyhood's glow and glory
I died for Florence and for him.

"And when the damp and dreary mould
Full soon my little limbs shall hold,
Let Leonardo's finger write
Upon my grave, in letters bold:
*'His life was as a splash of gold
Against the plumage of the night.'*"

Thus spake the lad; and onward rolled
The world's great pageant fierce and bright.

THE MAGIC CITY

WHO knows where Babylon's forgotten
kings
Now keep their state?
Laid to their rest 'neath purple coverings,
They meet the common fate.

No traces that abide
Of all the Christs who bled upon the Cross
Ere Jesus died,
And by the Ganges sought the gain of loss:
Behold their priestly mantle's dye
Has faded, and their day gone by.

The witching girls with eyes so crystal-clear
And honeyed tresses bright,
Full many a fool's delight
And his heart's all:
These with the snows of yester-year
Not Villon's cry shall wake to light—
Asleep beyond recall.

The tables of the law are broken;
The flocks are feeding on the grass that
grows
About each sculptured token
Of ancient empire, and the wild wind blows
Yet, though the spell of death and ruin lord
The earth, above all mortal woes

Deathless triumphant sounds the poet's word,
Clothed with thought's flame, and through
the storm-fraught night.
Blazes like a mighty sword
Leaping to the fight.

Through the clang of battle, and the crash
Of worlds that to destruction fall,
Song rings out like silver trumpets' call,
Or, heard through all,
Harmonious still, great chords consenting clash.

Never is melody silent on earth;
Faint, far-away, but forever rings the sound of
its mirth,
Not even the sun is eternal, but immortal, O
Homer, thy birth!
And still the listening years
Repeat her lyric name,
Who wove song's deathless garland from her
tears
And from her shame.

And raised by music's might
—High walls in battlemented line—
A magic city dawns before my sight:
Golden temples rear their haughty heads
on high
Domes like new suns blazing seem to span
the sky.

I enter in, and straying stand at length
Amazed before a vast cathedral's door.
Immense it rises there, in conscious strength
That many a tempest bore.
On the threshold swift I pause:
Sound of ghostly footsteps awes
My eager feet that would an entrance
win,
Bids me kneel and murmur low
Prayers of reverence, as I know
What holy thoughts, what wisdom dwell
therein.

This is the home of high Teutonic speech
Where beauty's sacred fire forever glows.
Upon the Edda's broad foundation rose
The soaring columns vaulted each to each,
And Goethe, Shakespeare, Ibsen reach
Their spans cross the hall:
And over all
A dome that holds the light,
The Master-Man, whose message mys-
tical
Bade us be bold and laugh and seize
delight,
Before he vanished into endless night
At Zarathustra's call!

Of song is made the painted windows' sheen,
The lustre of the lamps,
The tapestries shot with gold:

On each his own design some singer stamps,
The very stones have voices, that proclaim
The Magic City and uphold
Her deathless fame.

The Holy of Holies is this place:
Some hanging that the wall may grace
To weave with care,
Or with the smoking censer pace,
Or do least service in that blessed throng,
Is to claim kinship with God's saints and
wear
The martyr's crown of song.

THE CHALLENGE

I CHALLENGE you!" you said to me
The curtain parts. You enter in.
A dream of pink and ivory
Through the soft satin peeps your skin

Before me, in defiance bold,
Now all your little being stands.
Your breasts like two small birds I hold—
I feel their heart-beats with my hands

But in your eyes there is no dread:
A little animal at play
You cuddle up within my bed,
And simply will not go away.

Perhaps some sober Puritan
Would take your tender ways amiss,
I am not marble, but a man—
Worlds have been bartered for a kiss.

And though but now your hand and eye
Upon forbidden ways have strayed,
Against the damask sheet you lie
More like a flower than a maid.

How white are you, how brown am I,
My lily girl! My midnight rose!
How delicate against my thigh
Is the indenture of your toes.

No after-savors mar your lips
With memories of past delight,
Save phantom lads who come on ships
Of dreams to little girls at night.

A thornless rose of memory
Shall be this strange night's white caress.
My love with you deals tenderly,
And life, I pray will do no less.

"Is this not love's way, even so?"
You ask and smile triumphantly,
And know not that still home you go
With all your young virginity.

Scat, little kitten, nor delay,
While there as yet, is naught to rue!

The city swarms with beasts of prey
Who lie in wait for such as you.

Avaunt, incredible gamin!

You have no right at all to be,
Save in the sculptures of Rodin,
Or else—in Greek mythology.

THE PILGRIM

THERE knocked One nightly at the harlot's house;
Wan was His mouth as kisses without love.
His groping fingers followed tremulous
The winding of her delicate thin veins;
He traced the waxen contour of her breast,
And then, as baffled in some strange pursuit,
Drew her to Him in weariest embrace;
And, as she shuddered in His grasp, He
watched,
Still passionless, the working of her throat.
The woman's cheek grew crimson as He gazed,
But He, a scowling and disgruntled guest,
Rose white and famished from her body's feast.
Yet one night, pausing half-way, He turned
back,
Lured by the wraith of long-departed hope;
And then He asked of her a monstrous thing.
The strumpet blanched and, rising from the
couch,

Spat in His face.

Straightway the Stranger's eye
 Blazoned exultant with the pilgrim's joy
 When ends the quest. He lifted up His hands
 In quiet benediction, and a light
 Miraculous upon His forehead shone.
 But she, being blind, still cursed Him, and
 reviled:

"Albeit I sell my body for very shame
 I am a woman, not a beast; but thou——"
 "And I," quoth he, "a Seeker after God . . ."

ATTAR OF SONG

LIKE Lilith, mother Lilith, I have wound
 About my heart the serpent of desire.
 A purple galleon on a sea of fire
 Has borne my footsteps to forbidden ground,
 Where glittering with corruption of all time,
 Death in its shadow, dreams the Upas tree;
 But with its dew, as sugar sucks the bee,
 I have enriched the honeycomb of rhyme.

A riot of strange roses is my life—
 Pale as Narcissus gazing wistfully,
 And crimson red as the great Rose of Strife
 Upon the zone of Menelaus' wife,—
 Distilled by love with lyric alchemy,
 Heart of my heart, into one song for thee.

THE BURIED CITY

MY heart is like a city of the gay
 Reared on the ruins of a perished one,
 Wherein my dead loves cower from the sun,
 White-swathed like kings, the Pharaohs of a
 day.

Within the buried city stirs no sound
 Save for the bat, forgetful of the rod,
 Perched on the knee of some deserted god,
 And for the groan of rivers underground.

Stray not, my Love, 'mid the sarcophagi,
 Tempt not the silence . . . for the fates are
 deep,
 Lest all the dreamers deeming doomsday nigh
 Leap forth in terror from their haunted
 sleep;
 And, like the peal of an accursed bell,
 Thy voice call ghosts of dead things back from
 hell!

TRIUMPHATRIX

AS some great monarch in triumphal train
 Holds in his thrall an hundred captive
 kings,
 Guard thou the loves of all my vanished
 springs
 To wait as handmaids on thy sweet disdain.
 And thou shalt wear their tresses like bright
 rings,

For their defeat perpetuates thy reign!

With thy imperious girlhood vie in vain
The pallid hosts of all old poignant things.

Place on thy brow the mystic diadem

With women's faces cunningly embossed,
Whereon each memory glitters like a gem;

But mark that mine were regal loves that
lost

And loved like queens, nor haggled for the
cost—

And having conquered, oh be kind to them!

AT NIGHTFALL

SWEET is the highroad when the skylarks
call,

When we and Love go rambling through the
land.

But shall we still walk gaily hand in hand
At the road's turning and the twilight's fall?

Then darkness shall divide us like a wall,
And uncouth evil nightbirds flap their wings;
The solitude of all created things
Will creep upon us shuddering like a pall.

This is the knowledge I have wrung from pain:
We, yea, all lovers, are not one, but twain,

Each by strange wisps to strange abysses
drawn.

But through the black immensity of night
Love's little lantern, as a glow-worm's bright,
May lead our steps to some stupendous dawn.

FINALE

HOW changed the house is when not Love
is there!

Your deep eyes vex me like some magic book
I cannot ponder. Nay, I will not brook
The weariness of your too golden hair!
Hush! Was not that the creaking of a stair?
Was it Love's footfall or the wind? I look
In vain for him in every hidden nook—
There is no sound of laughter anywhere . . .

Ah, sweet, he has forsaken us, not base,
But heedless, boyish—and the world is wide!
He sees not now your sorrow-haunted face,
Nor feels the dagger that has pierced my
side,
And how all joy is vanished from the place
As from a house in which a child has died.

THE LOVE SEAL

ASILVER sea beneath the stars—
We paid to love his mystic rites,
And from thy lips I kissed the scars
Of fiercer joys and stranger nights.

What redder lips, what mouth of fate,
Till Buddha noddeth near the goal,
Shall, stronger still, obliterate
My one night's madness from thy soul?

I brand thee through eternity,
 Upon thy blood I set my seal,
 And boy and girl and change and sea
 Cannot wipe out my mark or heal.

While the great life-snake sheds its coat,
 I must rehearse my tragic part,
 To kiss the love-wounds from thy throat,
 And burn the iron in thy—heart.

RESPITE

(*For M. E. V.*)

I SHALL not, dead, miss love's sublimities,
 The pageantry, the passion, and the smart,
 But only this, the sweet proximities
 Of flesh to flesh, of heart-beat to the heart.

I shall not, dead, remember anything,
 The sun, the moon, the waters, and the lands,
 The wild adventure of my journeying:
 Only the weary flutter of white hands.

Let earth the maggot feed upon my brain,
 Let me forget the rime, the rune, the rose,
 If but this vision to the end remain:
 A little body, birdlike, nestling close.

Of all God's deeds the foulest deed is this:
 Though my heart aches, though all my man-
 hood squirms,

When I am dead, your touch, your mouth, your
kiss

Dear Love, will seem no sweeter than the
worm's.

For hearts and worms and lovers' ecstasy

To life's Mad Master, on invention bent,
Are but the ashes of his alchemy
That he discards in his experiment.

There is no lodestar in this lonely sea,
No ghost of any harbor for my quest,
Save Love's eyes shining tenderly,
Save for the respite of your breast,
And—maybe—rest.

DR. FAUST'S DESCENT FROM HEAVEN

I

THOUGH your womb be the mother of bliss,
O Earth, and the mother of woes,
Though your large hands be full of the strange
gifts of life, the kiss, and the worm, and
the rose,
The thunders that break from the sky of fate,
and the flash in the pan,
To me they are empty, for I know all things
encompassed of man.
The devious desires that crouch through the
brain like monsters that nest in the sea,
Pass—pageants of ghosts—through the luminous
eyes of one who is dear to me.

The other—all pangs and delights of the visible
world and its quests,
Are engraved in the exquisite curve of her
throat and the hieroglyphs of her breasts.
One rides on the wingèd chimaera of dreams
through aeons purple and red,
The other—like new-mown grass is the scent
of her flesh in my bed.
What can you give me of joy, Earth, what of
bitter and sweet?
*I have loved Helen of Troy and the blonde Mar-
guerite.*

II

Straightforth with the Magical Seal I knocked
at the musical gates
Of Heaven. The angels grew pale, or swooned
in the arms of their mates.
“I have sounded all chords in the harp of man’s
life,” I said,
“It is I, Doctor Faust. Now give me your man-
na for bread.”
And they gave me their manna to eat, and
drink, and I drank thereof,
But they tasted as ashes and stale in my mouth
after the kisses of love.
So I spake up to God: “In your realm, O Lord,
there is nothing to do
For a man such as I. Let me pass. T’were dif-
ferent if I could be you!
To play with omnipotence, curb lightnings, and
summon new worlds at my will—

Yet I stretch out no impious hand for your kingdom. I, too, have my fill.
Though the suns be your toy, of Love's breasts have I joy, though the prayer of the saints be your meat,
Have you loved Helen of Troy and the blonde Marguerite?"

III

Into Inferno I stalked to the stream where sulphur and brimstone well
Through lonelinesses more deep than the Florentine's Frozen Hell.
I came to the nethermost place where Satan sate in splendor alone,
The writhing limbs of anguished men were the pillars of his throne.
His court was paved with dead men's hopes stamped like designs into mud,
From thousand scarlet candles came the drip of human blood.
In his eyes were all the tortures of all nights barren and fever-tossed
Of all who loved and won and all who loved and lost.
And I grasped the hand of the Prince of Hell:
 "O brother once divine,
Lo, all your thorns have pierced my side and all your hells were mine.
Thorns of flame that destroy, remorse, with slow but infallible feet:

I have loved Helen of Troy and the blonde Marguerite."

IV

From the lesser gods to their masters, Time
and Eternity,

I turned—to crave the single boon that they
could give to me.

"I am the Pilgrim of Passion who ever must
choose and grieve

Between the earth-born daughters of Lilith and
of Eve.

For I have lost my way twixt Heaven and Hell
and Earth,

Give me oblivion," I said, "or grant me an-
other birth!

Grant me another encasement where the flesh
shall be the soul,

Where good shall be as evil and pole as anti-
pole.

Let Lilith and her sister, both back into night
be thrust,

Fashion Woman anew out of their astral dust.
Dreams of impossible joy and impossible love-

liness meet

*When beautiful Helen of Troy shall be one
with the blonde Marguerite."*

MAN TO HIS MAKER

FROM the white ulcer of thy snow,
From the green leprosy of spring,
Preserve us, Lord, whose mercies sting,
Whose loaded dice win every throw.

Foredoomed to perish in the strife
With maggots fattened by thy breath,
Free us from life's mad lover—death,
And save us from death's nightmare—life.

Blind microscopic molluscs we,
Beneath thy scorn that spawn and squirm,
Redeem us from thy gloating worm
And from the consciousness of thee.

If play we must this sorry role
For thy amusement, spare the cant:
Make man equal of the ant,
Celestial Sadist! Take the soul.

And crush us back into the sod,
Whose fate is futile utterly,
Save as a prank of destiny
Played by a bored and bilious god.

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- 393 Life of Frederick the Great.
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- 523 Life of Benjamin Franklin.
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- 518 The Life and Works of
Charles Dickens. Swasey.
- 521 Life of John Brown. Gold.
- 666-667 Sarah Bernhardt As I
Knew Her. 2 Vols. Dorian.

Drama

- (See "Literature (Ancient)" for Greek and Roman Drama. See "Shakespeare" for Shakespearean Plays and Criticism. See "Oscar Wilde." See "French Literature" for Moliere, Victor Hugo and Maeterlinck. See "Ibsen, Henrik." See "The Mikado. Gilbert. 220 The Anti-Semites. Schnitzler. 308 She Stoops to Conquer. Goldsmith. 335 The Land of Heart's Desire. Yeats. 337 Pippa Passes. Browning.)

- 371 Empedocles on Etna.
Arnold.
- 378 The Maid of Orleans.
Samuels.
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- 384 Four One-Act Plays.
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- 413 The Need for Art in Life. Holborn.
 507 Richard Wagner: An Introduction. Goldberg.
 (Note: In the operatic titles listed below, Mr. Theo. M. R. von Keler gives short biographical sketches, the story of the opera and helpful criticism of the music, illustrated by excerpts from the score.)
 410 Die Walkuere. Wagner.
 440 Cavalleria Rusticana. Mascagni.
 441 I Pagliacci. Leoncavallo.
 455 Richard Strauss's Salome.
 456 Carmen. Bizet.
 457 Lohengrin. Wagner.
 458 Tannhauser. Wagner.
 459 Das Rheingold. Wagner.
 494 Siegfried. Wagner.
 495 Rigoletto. Verdi.
 569 Gotterdammerung. Wagner.

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- 50 Paine's Common Sense.
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